expansion of banking activities during the Seventh Five Year Plan period; and

(b) what are the centres identified in each district of Orissa under Branch Expansion Programme from 1985 to 1990 and what action is being taken by the Reserve Bank in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI JANARDHAN POOJARI): (a) The aim of Branch Licensing Policy for 1985—90 (co-terminus with the Seventh Five Year Plan Period) is to achieve a coverage of 17,000 population per bank office in rural and semi-urban areas of *each Development Block*. The policy also aims at filling up of spatial gaps with a view to ensure a bank office within 10 kms. from each village. Under this policy Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has advised the Lead Banks to constitute Groups for identification of centres for opening bank branches. The centres identified by the Groups would be forwarded to the State Governments for finalising the list. The Hilly tracts, regions which are sparsely populated and tribal areas will be given special consideration and expansion in such areas will be allowed on a comparatively liberal basis taking into account the existing gaps in the availability of banking facilities. Expansion in metropolitan and urban centres, licences will be granted by RBI on a selective basis keeping in view factors such as financial viability of the branch, clearly established need of the centre etc.

(b) RBI has reported that 234 centres were identified by the Lead Bank Groups and finalised by the Government of Orissa for opening branches in each district of Orissa as per details given below:—

Name of District	No. of centres identified
1. Balasore . . .	10
2. Bolangir . . .	14
3. Cuttack . . .	42
4. Dhenkanal . . .	4
5. Kalabandi . . .	8
6. Koraput . .	21
7. Keonjhar . . .	12
8. Mayurbhanj . . .	15
9. Phulbani . . .	8
10. Puri	26
11. Ganjam . . .	28
12. Sundergarh . . .	16
13. Sambalpur . . .	30
TOTAL:	234

Out of the above centres RBI has already allotted 6 centres to the Regional Rural Bank (RRB) and 1 centre to State Bank of India in Kalahandi District and 8 centres to the RRB in Phulbani District. The process of allotment of eligible centres to banks in respect of other Districts has not yet been completed.

Expasion of Excise Duty by the Golden Tobacco Company

1970. SHRI CHIMANBHAI MEHTA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Golden Tobacco Company (GTC) had lowered down the wholesale prices of cigarettes by making certain minor changes in the names of

brands with a view to avoid excise duty; and

(b) whether Government have inquired into the matter; if so, what is the estimated evasion of Central excise duty by the Golden Tobacco Company?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI JANARDHAN POOJARI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Yes, Sir. From November 1985, the approval of brand names etc. have been centralized at Delhi, to prevent such types of misuse.

The total estimated evasion of central excise duty in major cases against M/s. Golden Tobacco Company exceeds Rs. 100 crores. This amount is however subject to some modification on final adjudication of the cases.

Production of Atom Bomb by Pakistan

1971. SHRI KAPIL VERMA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) what is Government's assessment about the stage of production of Atom bomb by Pakistan; and

(b) whether she has already produced it or is close to it or has only acquired the capability for it?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI K. R. NARAYANAN): (a) and (b) Government are concerned at the non-peaceful dimension of Pakistan's nuclear programme. A constant watch is being kept on this aspect as all others having a bearing on India's security.

Withdrawal of Troops from Afghanistan by Soviet Union

1972. SHRI MAHENDRA PRASAD: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the reported speech of Mr. Mikhail Gorbachov that the Soviet Union will withdraw part of its troops from Afghanistan; and

(b) if so, whether the Government of India consider this move as a positive measure towards ensuring peace in this subcontinent?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI K. R. NARAYANAN): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. India would welcome any move which contributes towards a peaceful, comprehensive political settlement of the Afghan problem based on non-intervention and non-interference.

News regarding Pakistan's plan on Punjab

1973. SHRI B. SATYANARAYAN REDDY: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item published in the National Press on the 30th July, 1986 to the effect that Pakistan has undertaken a grand Punjab subversion plan; and

(b) if so, what are the details thereof and whether Government have taken up the matter with Pakistan?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI K. R. NARAYANAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The news item in question relates to Pakistan's assistance to Sikh terrorists in Punjab. Our concerns on this issue have been conveyed to the Pakistan Government on different occasions and at various levels.